

**HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM**  
REVISED AS OF 1 OCTOBER 1997

**General** - Exposure to high intensity noise is one of the most widespread hazards in DNSC. Noise induced hearing loss, although painless, is irreparable. Permanent hearing loss frequently is not recognized by the individual because it affects hearing of sounds higher in frequency than those necessary for speech communication. However, appreciable difficulty in speech communication (the ability to detect and understand speech sounds) may result if deterioration of an individual's auditory acuity continues because of exposure to hazardous noise. The provisions of DNSC's hearing conservation program as it relates to noise monitoring, audiometric testing, hearing protectors, training, and recordkeeping are explained below. It is the responsibility of managers and supervisors to implement the provisions of this program and the responsibility of all affected DNSC employees to use hearing protection devices when required.

**Monitoring** - All areas, operations, and machinery within DNSC controlled facilities shall be monitored using noise dosimeters for representative personal sampling, and sound level meters to identify individual pieces of machinery which produce levels greater than those allowed by 29 CFR 1910.95. The results of this monitoring will be used to identify individuals who are required to be placed in DNSC's Hearing Conservation Program. Monitoring shall be repeated whenever a change in production, process, equipment or controls increases noise exposure to the extent that additional employees may be exposed at or above the action level of 85 decibels using an 8 hour time weighted average. DNSC employees exposed at or above the action level will be notified of their exposure. Also, affected employees or their representative shall be afforded the opportunity to observe monitoring.

**Audiometric testing** - All potential employees who could be exposed to hazardous noise levels in their employment with DNSC shall receive a baseline audiogram as part of their pre-placement medical examinations. All DNSC personnel on the medical surveillance program to include those personnel exposed to noise above the action level shall receive annual audiograms as part of their annual medical examinations. The results of the annual audiograms will be compared to the employees baseline audiogram to determine if a threshold shift has occurred in the employees hearing. If in the opinion of the physician overseeing the audio exams a threshold shift has occurred all follow-up testing required by 29 CFR 1910.95(g)(8) will be conducted. Audiometric testing shall be conducted by qualified personnel using equipment that meets the requirements of 29 CFR 1910.95(h).

**Hearing protectors** - Employees exposed to noise above the action level of 85 decibels based on the 8 hour time weighted average shall be issued hearing protectors designed to attenuate the employees exposure to a level below 90 decibels based on an 8 hour time weighted average.

**CAUTION**

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**Training** - Annually, training on hearing conservation shall be given to all affected employees. At a minimum the training shall consist information of the effects of noise on hearing, the purpose of hearing protector, the advantages, disadvantages, and attenuation of various types of hearing protectors. The employee shall also be instructed on the proper selection, fitting, use, and care of hearing protectors. The purpose of audiometric testing should also be explained.

**Recordkeeping** - Records of monitoring conducted in accordance with paragraph b of this section will be maintained at the respective DNSC depot office for a period of two years. Results of audiometric testing shall be maintained in the individuals medical folder for the duration of their employment. All required records shall be provided upon request to employees, former employees, and representative designated by the individual employee.

**Warning signs** - All equipment and machinery producing hazardous noise levels shall be posted with appropriate warning signs which require the operator to wear hearing protection.

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